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## Exploration and Discovery.

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### THE EGYPTIAN RESEARCH ACCOUNT AT EL KAB.

THE following, just received from Mr. J. E. Quibell, who is working with Petrie's "Research Account" at El Kab, sets forth briefly the success of his excavations at this place. A photograph and some account of the ancient city the reader will find in the BIBLICAL WORLD of last March (see frontispiece). The walls referred to by Mr. Quibell are those seen in the distance, and the rare old empire statues which he has discovered were in mastaba tombs located in the shadow of the walls as seen in the view. The cemetery is at the beholder's feet, in the plain between him and the city wall.

The letter is dated March 20, 1897, El Kab, Bassilieh, Upper Egypt:

I sit down at the end of a rather weary day to give you some idea of how we stand. The day has been the best of the season, for we have come on a serdab containing two statues of a certain Nefershemem, who was probably of the time of Snefru. I say this because the mastaba is one of a small group concealed by the sand heap at the north of the great wall, and in one of them, just east of the statues, was a diorite bowl with Snefru's Ka name, and in another close by to the south we got yesterday a fragment of another diorite with the name Snefru roughly scratched upon it. So the whole group is probably of that period. One of the statues is in limestone, seated, complete, rather good work; the other is a standing figure in sandstone, of still better work, but headless. However, so rare is old empire statuary and so important, as you know so well, that the discovery very much alters for the better the whole harvest of the year.

Most of our work has been in the middle empire cemetery east of the town. You will remember the mounds and depressions which point out the place clearly.

Of these wells I have turned out about 150. Each leads into two chambers, one north, one south, and in these the bodies are laid, with head to the north and in the regular Egyptian position, but with no sign of mummification. I must have a talk with all the excavators I can meet as to early mummies. I have found *none* in either the Old or Middle Kingdom. Was it only an upper-clan luxury until the XVIIIth?

With these burials I've got a large selection of pots, a good lot of ame-

thysts and carnelian beads, *Kohl*-pots, paint-slabs, and mirrors, but no scrap of papyrus or wood, and no inscriptions to speak of. I have not finished the cemetery — too expensive along with other things I have to do. For the earliest cemetery here is the best.

To the north of the great wall, under the sand, are some mastabas of the time of Snefru, and inside the inclosure the mastabas continue, and with them small graves of the type Petrie has called Libyan and De Morgan Neolithic.

Besides the mastabas there are also "stairway" graves of the type I found at Ballas. All had been quite looted save one in which I got some gold and carnelian beads and two small gold nuggets! These must, by the pottery found with them, be attributed to the old empire, and form the *earliest jewelry found in Egypt*.

The burials in large pots of coarse earthenware such as were found at Ballas, and also, it is said, at Gizeh, occur also here. They too are of the old kingdom and must surely belong to a separate strain in the population. With one such burial I got a copper or bronze cylinder of Userkaf.

Do you remember a class of cylinders very thick compared with their length, inscribed with rough characters apparently not hieroglyphs? There are a lot of them at University College in London, for one place.

Do you remember, too, the little dolls, about six inches long, made in a yellowish ware and representing in a very rude style women, sometimes with babies on their backs?

Both of these classes of objects, I have now, I think, fixed to the Old Kingdom.

You will see we have not had bad luck. I fear Gizeh will take most of our prizes; but more than one little problem has been simply solved. The walls have disappointed me; I have not fixed their date. The interior of El Kab was never inhabited apparently, so we cannot get pottery near the walls. It is useless to attempt to tunnel beneath them. The gates have yielded no foundation deposit.

In the large temple I have not done much; merely tried for foundation deposits. They are of Amenhotep II.

I hope I will get off another epistle to you before long. This is a bad time for writing. In less than a fortnight I must be away. Yours sincerely,

J. E. QUIBELL.

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#### REORGANIZATION OF THE EGYPT EXPLORATION FUND IN AMERICA.

THE following action of the London Committee of the E. E. F. will show how timely has been the organization of the Chicago Society of Egyptian Research which is now one of the "independent organi-